

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

of the

CHARLES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

(as required by Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland)



Prepared by

Planning Division
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

VISION STATEMENT

Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.

Purpose of Report

Section 3.09, Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, requires the Planning Commission to prepare and file an annual report with the County Commissioners. It states that the report shall be made available for public inspection and a copy of the report shall be mailed to the Director of the Maryland Office of State Planning. The criteria for the content of the report are specified as follows:

"The annual report shall (a) index and locate on a map all changes in development patterns including land use, transportation, community facilities patterns, zoning map amendments, and subdivision plats which have occurred during the period covered by the report, and shall state whether these changes are or are not consistent with each other, with the recommendations of the last annual report, with adopted plans of adjoining jurisdictions, and with the adopted plans of all state and local jurisdictions that have the responsibility for financing and constructing public improvements necessary to implement the jurisdiction's plan; (b) contain statements and recommendations for improving the planning and development process within the jurisdiction."

The 2006 Annual Report has been designed to address the requirements of Section 3.09. Five sections, corresponding to the topics listed in (a) above, describe the respective changes in development patterns which have occurred over the year. Maps are included to depict locations of affected lands. In contrast to some previous years' reports, the annual report is not intended to provide a comprehensive account of the activities of the Planning Office.

Sources of Additional Information

This report has been written to specifically address Section 3.09 of Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, as outlined above. Detailed information on other endeavors, projects, operations and/or the status of submittals is available directly through the following sources:

Planning Office:	(301) 870-3896
Permits Administration:	(301) 645-0692
Capital and Development Services:	(301) 870-3937
County Attorney's Office:	(301) 645-0555
Automated Response System:	(301) 645-0600

Charles County Government Web Site: <www.charlescounty.org>

In compliance with the above-stated provision of Section 309, Article 66B, this Annual Report was adopted by the Charles County Planning Commission on October 15, 2007 and presented to the Charles County Commissioners on February 20, 2008.

Executive Summary

Charles County has seen brisk growth over the past several years in terms of population and approved building lots. Currently ranked by the Census Bureau as the state's sixth fastest growing county, Charles County's population increased 16.5%, from 120,546 to 140,416, between the last census in April of 2000 and July 1, 2006. The county's current population estimate as of December 31, 2006 is 142,896. The latest Census Bureau figures correspond to an annualized growth rate of 2.58% during this period. According to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, the target growth rate is between 1.7 and 2.0%. The annualized growth rate of 2.58% exceeds this target.

This Annual Report provides an opportunity for the Charles County Planning Commission to review development approvals for 2006. Actual development can then be compared to the overall vision of future development as articulated in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The managed growth strategy outlined in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan was first developed in 1990 and refined in 1997. The overall vision and subsequent policy seeks to concentrate development in the Development District permitting efficient use of current and planned infrastructure improvements including roads, water and sewer, and school construction. Therefore, the overarching land use goal in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan is to direct 75% of all development to the northern and western portions of the county identified as the Development District. Compared to actual development approved in 2006, the County is meeting this goal for final plats at 76%, but is just under the goal at 74% for preliminary plans. However, if the number of acres of land that these buildable lots are located on is considered, the majority of the developed land is actually outside of the Development District. This is because the majority of the development occurring outside of the Development District is single-family-detached subdivisions. Previous years exhibit this same pattern of development as well. This pattern is a reflection of the lower average base density requirements in the rural zones (one unit per three acres versus one unit per acre or less in the Development District). Consequently, any new development activity in the rural area will consume more land per lot than development in the Development District.

Further analysis of preliminary plans and final plats yield that Charles County is approving more lots per year than the target rate necessary to meet housing demands over the next 20 years. According to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, in order to meet population projections, the target number of housing units in the County from the year 2005 to the year 2025 should be 23,300. This breaks down to approximately 1,110 dwelling units per year for the 21 year period. In 2006, 1,350 preliminary lots were approved inside the Development District and 547 were approved outside of the Development District. This means that the County approved 62% more lots inside the Development District than the target rate, as well as 97% more lots outside of the Development District based on the goal of 75% of all development occurring within the boundary of the Development District.¹ Since 2002, the County has realized a surplus in preliminary building lots, but not until more recently was there also a surplus in final plat lots. In 2006, 1,365 Use and Occupancy (U&O) permits for new housing units were issued.²

So far, in 2007, preliminary plan activity is comparable to previous years. However, conclusive analysis will not be possible until the close of the calendar year. To date, 16 preliminary plans have been submitted compared to 15 by the end of July last year. In terms of building lots, preliminary plans account for 196 single family lots, and 6 commercial lots inside the Development District and 351 single family lots outside the Development District. It should be noted that 237 of the lots located outside of the Development District are new lots that are being created in Swan Point.

¹Approval of a preliminary plan is the first step in the development process. It is important to note that many lots approved in preliminary plans are not recorded, due to revisions that occur in the later stages of the approval process and the expiration and voiding of preliminary plan approvals due to failure of the applicant to complete later stages of the review process.

²This figure includes the independent municipalities of La Plata and Indian Head in order to get a more realistic number of new housing units that became occupied in Charles County in 2006. According to the Permits Department, 1,096 U&O permits were issued by Charles County, excluding the towns of La Plata and Indian Head. Because the Permits Department data is updated on a regular basis, there is a possible variation in reporting results at any given time. Staff considers any variation under 5% to be an acceptable range and attributable to human error or randomness and does not impact analysis of the data.

Introduction

Planning Commission Functions and Membership

The Planning Commission consists of seven members who are appointed by the County Commissioners. Members serve four-year terms, with a chairperson appointed annually by the Commissioners.

The purpose and functions of the Charles County Planning Commission are stated in Article 66B, Charles County Code of Public Laws, and the Charles County Zoning Ordinance. Functions include:

- ▶ Prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for development of the jurisdiction, including among other things, land use, water and sewerage facilities, and transportation in accordance with section 3.05 of Article 66B;
- ▶ Review and approve the subdivision of land of the jurisdiction in accordance with section 3.05 of Article 66B;
- ▶ Reserve transportation facility rights-of-way in accordance with section 6.01 of Article 66B;
- ▶ Review and approve adequate public facilities studies and mitigation measures;
- ▶ Approve and periodically amend the Site Design and Architectural Guidelines;
- ▶ Review and provide recommendations on rezoning requests for base zones, overlay zones, and floating zones;
- ▶ Review and make recommendations for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations; and
- ▶ Adopt rules and regulations governing its procedure and operation not inconsistent with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

The 2006 Planning Commission consisted of the following members:

Raymond Detig, Chairman

Bobbie Wise, Vice Chairman

H. Duncan Creelman, Jr., Secretary

Louis Grasso

Robert Mitchell

Gail Manuel

Joseph Richard

Legal Counsel: Sue Greer, Assistant County Attorney for Charles County

Clerk: Theresa Pickeral

During 2006, the Charles County Planning Commission conducted twenty-one regularly scheduled meetings.

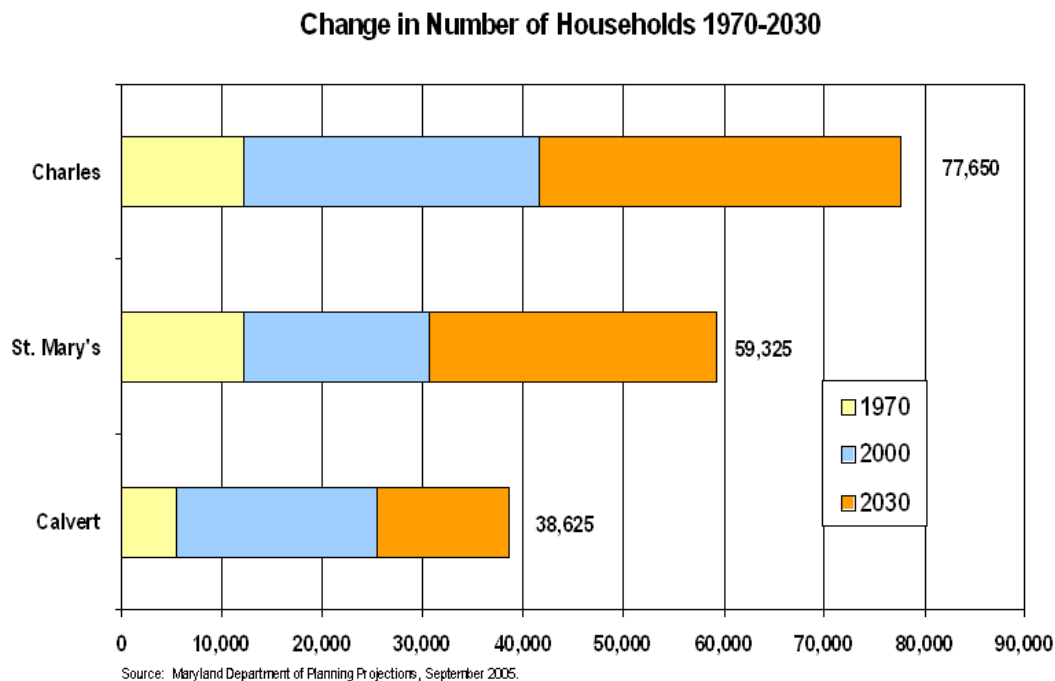
Subdivision and Site Plan Administration

Changes in Development Patterns

Over the years, land use patterns have changed in Charles County as development both inside and outside the Development District have accelerated. This acceleration has been driven by the fact that the cost of land is relatively cheaper in Charles County than in other areas surrounding Washington DC as well as the close proximity of the county to Washington DC. Ultimately, this has lured developers to Charles County.

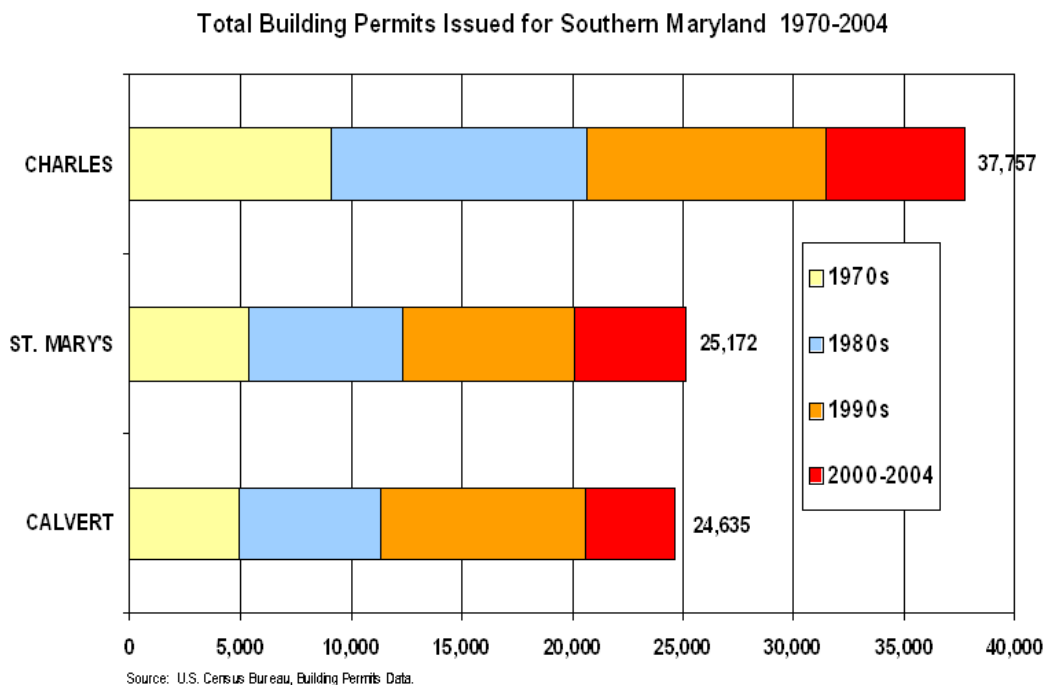
Southern Maryland is the fastest growing region in the state when measured by population. Figure 1 demonstrates how the number of households is expected to grow in each of the Southern Maryland counties by the year 2030. Charles County will see the greatest increase in the number of households in comparison to St. Mary's and Calvert counties respectively. Similarly, Figure 2 on the following page shows the number of building permits since 1970 for the Southern Maryland Counties.

Figure 1: Change in Number of Households 1970-2030



Courtesy: Maryland Department of Planning

Figure 2: Total Building Permits Issued for Southern Maryland 1970-2004



Courtesy: Maryland Department of Planning

Residential Development Approvals

Subdivisions

During their twenty-one regularly scheduled meetings, the Planning Commission approved thirty one (31) preliminary subdivision plans. One thousand sixteen (1016) of the newly approved lots will ultimately be created for single-family housing, 129 for townhouse units, 84 condominiums, 659 apartments, and the remaining 9 lots will be used for commercial purposes. Of these lots, the majority of the apartments are part of mixed-use development projects.

A total of 164 final plats containing 1235 lots were approved by the Planning Commission during 2006. The lots can be separated into 4 categories - 920 residential lots inside the Development District, 297 residential lots outside the Development District and 18 commercial lots inside the Development District, 0 commercial lots outside the Development District.

Commercial Development Approvals

Site Plan Approvals

Eighty one (81) site plans for commercial projects were approved by the Planning Commission during the year. Twenty five (25) new construction site plans, forty five (45) additions to existing structures and eleven (11) change of Use site plans were approved. Eight (8) site plans for commercial projects located in the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zone were approved by the Planning Commission during the year. The Total Square Footage of approved new construction is 1,073,937 Square Feet and the total square footage of approved additions to existing structures equals 53,089 square feet.

Subdivision Plats

A review of approved preliminary plans and final plats in Charles County during 2006 demonstrates that residential development accounts for most of the development in Charles County. Further, single-family housing accounts for the highest proportion of residential development for both preliminary plans and final plats.

Preliminary Lots: During 2006, the Planning Commission approved preliminary plans that contained 1897 individual lots or units. The preliminary lot figures do not include revisions, which means that lots have not been counted twice, nor have they been removed as a result of a revision. Further, preliminary lots only contain buildable lots. This means that all other types of lots (open space, agricultural preservation, storm water management, etc.) are not included in the figures. The lots can be broken down as follows:

Total	Type	Percent of Total
1016	Single-family	54%
129	Townhouse	7%
659	Apartments	34%
84	Condominiums	4%
9	Commercial	1%

Of the total 1897 lots approved during 2006, 71% or 1350 lots were located inside the Development District, and the remaining 29% (547), were located outside. This falls just slightly short of the Comprehensive Plan goal of concentrating 75% of new development in the county's Development District.

Site Plan Submissions

Eighty eight (88) total site plans were submitted for review. Twenty three (23) new construction site plans totaling 1,346,861 square feet were received in 2006. Forty eight (48) additions to existing site plans totaling 50,846 square feet were submitted for review and seventeen (17) Change of Use site plans were received in 2006.

The following chart (on the next page) shows the distribution of preliminary plan lots approved inside and outside of the Development District from 2001-2006.

Number of Preliminary Lots Approved Inside and Outside of the Development District:

	TOTAL NO.	TOTAL INSIDE	PERCENT INSIDE	ACREAGE INSIDE	TOTAL OUT	PERCENT OUT	ACREAGE OUTSIDE
YEAR							
2001	251	141	56.00%	121 (16%)	110	44.00%	637 (84%)
2002	761	519	68.00%	271(20%)	242	32.00%	1081 (80%)
2003	1935	1665	86.00%	872 (42%)	270	14.00%	1229 (58%)
2004	1642	1349	82.00%	642 (55%)	293	18.00%	523 (45%)
2005	1566	1118	71.00%	658 (20%)	448	29.00%	2596 (80%)
2006	1897	1350	71.00%	475 (18%)	547	29.00%	2189 (82%)

Figure 3 on the following page shows the number of preliminary lots approved inside and outside of the Development District from 2001-2006. Similarly, Figure 4, shows the total acreage for the preliminary lots approved for years 2001-2006.

Figure 3. Preliminary Lots Approved

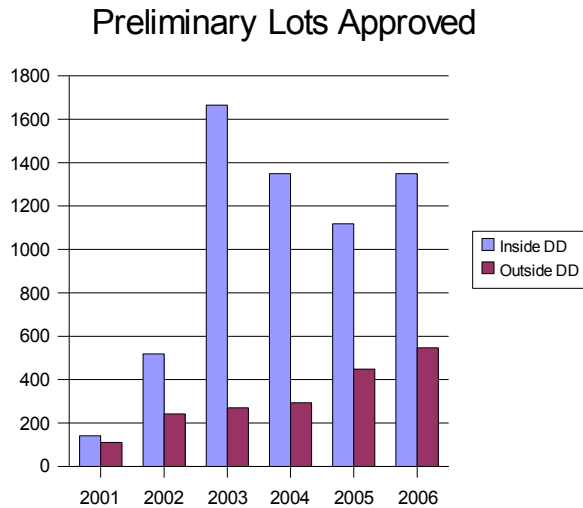
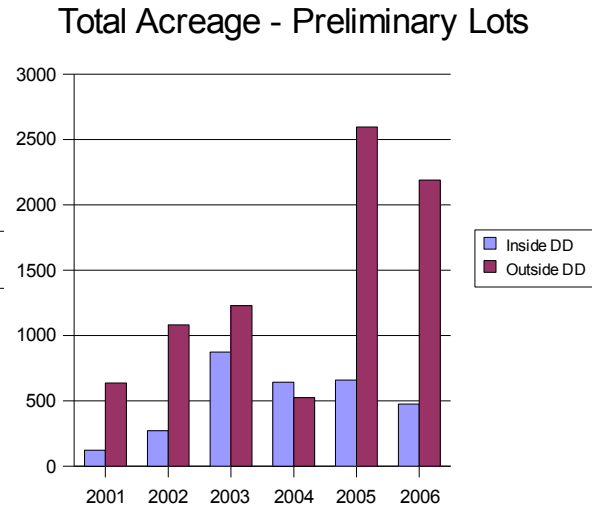


Figure 4. Total Acreage – Preliminary Lots



Final Plat Lots: During 2006, the Planning Commission approved a total of 164 final subdivision plats containing a total of 1235 new lots. These final lots can be broken down as follows:

<i>Total</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
1217	Residential	> 99%
18	Commercial	< 1%

Of the total final plat lots, 76%, or 938 lots, were located inside of the county's Development District, leaving the remaining 24% (297 lots) outside of this designated area.

Number of Final Plat Lots Approved Inside and Outside of the Development District

YEAR	TOTAL NO.	TOTAL INSIDE	PERCENT INSIDE	ACREAGE INSIDE	TOTAL OUT	PERCENT OUT	ACREAGE OUTSIDE
2001	517	302	58.00%	257(14%)	215	42.00%	1669 (86%)
2002	799	438	55.00%	558(14%)	361	45.00%	3507 (86%)
2003	758	566	75.00%	841(35%)	192	25.00%	1614 (65%)
2004	831	627	75.00%	786(38%)	204	25.00%	1275 (62%)
2005	1093	654	60.00%	951(27%)	439	40.00%	2537 (73%)
2006	1235	938	76.00%	694(22%)	297	24.00%	2445 (78%)

Figure 5, on the following page, shows the number of final plat lots approved inside and outside of the Development District from 2001-2006. Similarly, Figure 6, shows the total acreage for the final plat lots approved for years 2001-2006.

Figure 5. Final Plat Lots Approved

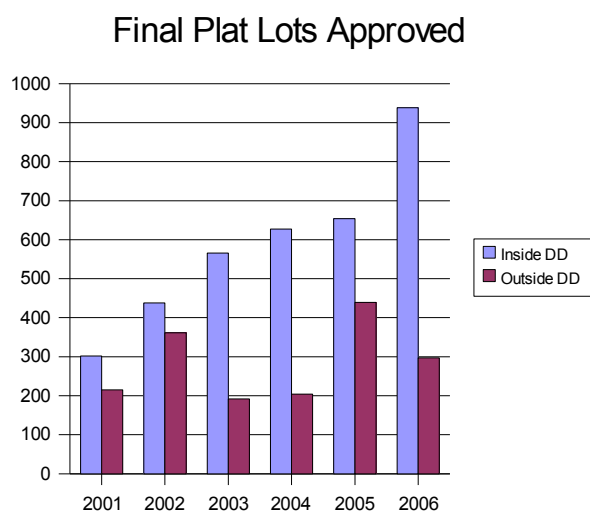
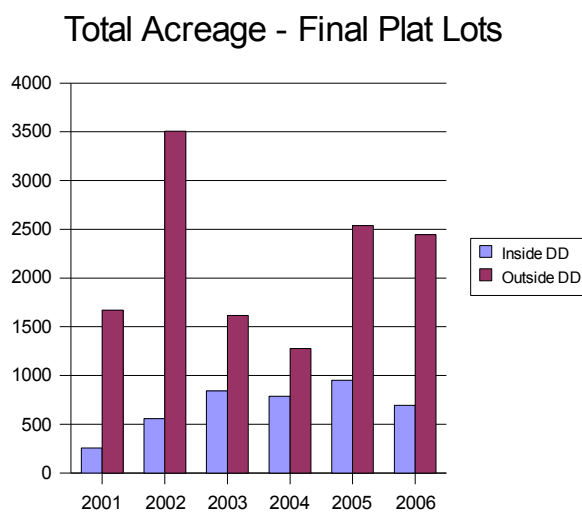


Figure 6. Total Acreage – Final Plat Lots



Environmental Planning

Agricultural Land Preservation Districts

The Planning Commission approved twenty (20) properties, for a total of 2,021 acres, to be designated as Agricultural Land Preservation Districts.

Other Preservation Programs

In an effort to preserve the rural and agricultural land, Charles County works with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to implement several land preservation programs. The most active programs include the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), the Rural Legacy Program and the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Program.

Through these programs, the County was able to work with land owners to preserve 1,212 acres in 2006. This is 39% more than last year's total of 873 acres preserved. The use of TDRs in particular increased dramatically in 2006 (51% more acres preserved in 2006 than 2005). The following table shows the acreage preserved by each of these programs:

<i>Program</i>	<i>Land Preserved (Acres)</i>
MALPF	65
Rural Legacy Program	175
Transferable Development Rights Program	<u>972</u>
Total	1,212

Forest Conservation

In an effort to preserve the environment and minimize impacts from development, a forest stand delineation and a Forest Conservation Plan must be submitted as part of the subdivision or site plan approval process. The conservation plan must be approved prior to any site clearing or grading taking place.

During 2006, approximately 394.35 acres were retained or reforested/afforested and placed in forest conservation easements. Approximately 368.37 acres were approved for clearing, which is 30% less than the acreage cleared in 2005. A total of forty-six Forest Conservation Plans were approved in 2006.

Community Planning

Comprehensive Plan

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan provides the policy framework to manage and direct Charles County's future development. The Plan is designed to address the County's needs through the year 2025. The “theme” of the plan encourages the County to preserve the present “character” of the County and improve the quality of life for its citizens, while at the same time maintaining a pace of growth and development which is managed. Through a series of goals and objectives in each of the plan's elements, guidance is provided for public decisions regarding how development will be managed and/or regulated, where and how it should occur, and where capital improvements and public services should be provided.

Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area Plan

The Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area Plan, adopted in 2001, was developed to guide future land use and development in the Bryans Road-Indian Head Area of Charles County, Maryland. Adopted as part of the Charles County Comprehensive Plan, the Sub-Area Plan establishes a “vision” for the area; an overall image of what the Bryans Road-Indian Head communities want to be and how they should look in the future. It addresses land use and development, transportation, environment, open space, and public facilities such as water and sewer, parks, and schools.

The Sub-Area covers approximately 17.5 square miles, a little under four percent of Charles County’s land area. As of 2000, the Sub-Area was home to approximately 10,800 people, nearly nine percent of the County’s population. Important economic assets in the Sub-Area include the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head Division, one of the largest employers in the County, the County’s only airport, and the Bryans Road and Indian Head business areas. In addition, the County is working in partnership with private developers, naval base officials, and other research entities to establish an energetics research facility in Bryans Road, which will attract related businesses and further spur economic development in the area. The Sub-Area also contains valuable environmental assets including portions of the Mattawoman Creek Natural Environment Area, and a 2,175-acre, mostly forested tract purchased by the State in 1998.

In 2005 the County adopted comprehensive rezoning for the Bryans Road Town Center. The objective of the new zoning is to provide for more efficient use of land and promote a more walkable community by allowing compact, moderate to high density development in a small core area centered around the intersection of MD Routes 210 and 227. The concentration of development in this core area, the Town Center Core, will minimize low-density, sprawl development in surrounding areas. Since the zoning was adopted, there have been two preliminary subdivision plans for residential development submitted for approval in the new zones (Guilford West and Hope Park), while several other plans have been discussed with staff at the conceptual level; to date there are no projects completed under the new core zoning. However, the Energetics Technology Center, expected to begin construction between 2008 and 2009, will likely stimulate more residential and commercial development in the core area of Bryans Road.

The County is currently working with a citizens group, the Bryans Road Improvement Committee, to assist the county in implementation of the Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area Plan. The Committee members serve as a liaison between the County and the larger Bryans Road community, to communicate community issues to County staff.

Waldorf Sub-Area Plan

In 2004 the County adopted a Sub-Area Plan to help guide future land use and development in Waldorf. Similarly to the Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area Plan, the Waldorf Sub-Area Plan was adopted as part of the Charles County Comprehensive Plan. The Sub-Area Plan establishes a “vision” for development in the

Waldorf area; and addresses land use and development, transportation, environment, open space, and public facilities such as water and sewer, parks, and schools. Some of the main components of the vision are to create mixed-use, high-density Activity Centers as focal areas for Waldorf with supporting land uses around them; encourage redevelopment of older highway-oriented business areas into mixed use areas; promote diverse, well-located employment areas; and to coordinate land use with transportation and facilities planning. The County is currently working with a citizens group, the Waldorf Citizens Advisory Committee, to develop new zoning that will implement these recommended land use patterns. The draft zoning text and map amendments are expected to be completed in late 2007.

Hughesville Sub-Area Plan

The Hughesville Village is the largest village center in Charles County. It is located at the crossroads of MD 5 and MD 231 with easy access to Prince Frederick in Calvert County, as well as Charlotte Hall and Lexington Park in St. Mary's County. With the adoption of the Northeastern Alignment for the Hughesville Bypass, an opportunity arose to revitalize the Village Center of Hughesville and to attract new businesses to this regional center.

Along with an eleven member work group appointed by the County Commissioners, the County developed an economic development/revitalization plan for the rural village of Hughesville. The plan was adopted on May 2nd, 2007 as part of the Charles County Comprehensive Plan and addresses the types of economic development necessary to revitalize the existing village and the physical improvements necessary for revitalization to occur. The revitalization plan includes a market analysis to determine the potential market for different economic activities, as well as urban design, streetscape, and adaptive reuse recommendations aimed at improving the overall appearance of the Village. By creating a unique sense of place, it is hoped that existing businesses will be enhanced and new businesses will be attracted to the Village.

Priority Funding Area Map

Prepared in accordance with the Smart Growth Act criteria, the PFA map designates areas for the state to target funding for "growth-related" projects in the future. The PFA map incorporates approved revitalization areas, Village Centers, commercial and industrial zoned areas, employment areas, the Bryans Road Town Center, the Urban Core, and residential development which complies with the water and sewer criteria. In September of 2006, a request for an amendment to the PFA map was submitted by the United States Steel Corporation (USS) in conjunction with Brookfield Swan Point, LLC (Brookfield Homes). This requested map amendment designated approximately 202 acres of USS' neighboring property, commonly known as The Horse Farm, as a Priority Funding Area for Swan Point, so that it may be serviced by the Swan Point Wastewater Treatment Plant presently under construction. The County Commissioners approved the PFA amendment for Swan Point on March 14th, 2007.

Reality Check Plus Event

On June 15th, 2006, approximately 150 elected officials, government staff, and community, civic and business leaders from Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties participated in an event called Reality Check Plus. This event was sponsored by ULI Baltimore, 1000 Friends of Maryland, and the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education. Reality Check Plus is a regional growth visioning exercise designed to get policy makers and leaders in Maryland thinking about future growth and its implications. Four events around the state were held, including the event in Southern Maryland.

Experts project that the region will see an increase in houses by 77,843 and an increase in jobs by 70,629 by the year 2030. Participants at the Southern Maryland Reality Check Plus event were asked to decide where these new houses and jobs should be located in the three counties of Southern Maryland. In order to help participants to decide where the housing and jobs should go, they were asked to develop guiding principles at each table to facilitate this task. The guiding principles that the majority of tables included are as follows:

- Preserve environmentally sensitive and protected areas
- Focus development around existing infrastructure
- Encourage a jobs-housing balance
- Protect critical agricultural land
- Focus development inside the urban envelope
- Encourage more housing choices (affordability and types).

Adequate Public Facilities

Swan Point Master Plan Amendment and Re-Zoning

On June 25, 2006 the Charles County Commissioners approved the Swan Point Master Plan Amendment and re-zoning of a portion of the property, known as the Horse Farm. This approval reconfigured the undeveloped portion of the Swan Point Community to allow a mixed use design within the Planned Waterfront Community. The change to the development plans included a hotel and conference center, multiple piers, a new pool and bathhouse, and various commercial support services. To facilitate this change, the Developer obtained state approvals to replace the existing wastewater treatment plant as well as increase the previous groundwater appropriation permit for water supply. Application for building permits are expected to begin in mid-2007.

Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan Update

The Planning Department staff completed the three year update of the County's Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan in October of 2006. As required by State's Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), each County must review and update the local water and sewer plan document every third year. This update included the changes to the Swan Point water and sewer infrastructure, the Bel Alton/Jude House Wastewater treatment plant acquisition, and the Benedict central sewer planning effort. Other updates included various changes in water and wastewater flows for each sanitary system, updates on demand projections, and several policy updates.

Developer Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRA's)

In 2005, the Charles County Commissioners enacted legislation to enter into a Developer Rights and Responsibilities Agreement or a "DRRA" to allow a developer to make certain proffers as a form of mitigation for the impact their development will have on County infrastructure or resources. While the DRRA's do not take the place of the requirements of zoning or subdivision regulations, the agreements do allow the developer to offer land, infrastructure improvements or funding to mitigate for their subdivision's impact to County facilities. In 2006, the Charles County Commissioners approved a total of sixteen DRRA's for residential subdivisions, both inside and outside the Development District. Although many of the Agreements allot school allocations over several years, 506 allocations were granted through DRRA's for 2006, specifically. The County Commissioners have a cap of 900 school allocations that can be approved for each year.

The Charles County Commissioners appointed a committee, comprised of two Commissioners and three Elected Board of Education members, to review the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance as it relates to School Allocations, to ensure that the Policy is achieving its goals, and presenting solutions to address the situation of certain schools being over core capacity. The APFO Committee met eight (8) times and recommended changes to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The County Commissioners received a briefing from the APFO Committee on June 20, 2007, regarding their review and recommendations.

Administrative Extensions of Preliminary Plan for Subdivision

In March of 2006, the Charles County Commissioners granted the Planning Director the authority to grant one-year extensions to Preliminary Subdivision Plans that have reached the two year expiration date. This authority was endorsed by the Planning Commission for Preliminary Plans that require the one year extension and do not have major changes since their approval. This was primarily done to reduce the number of Preliminary Plan time extension requests brought before the Planning Commission, where no changes to the Plan or the associated conditions were needed. These extensions are necessary until the associated subdivision plats are recorded, fulfilling the subdivision process.

Zoning Map Amendments

There were three requests for Zoning Map Amendments reviewed by the Planning Commission during 2006. They are as follows:

ZMA #05-22, Swan Point Critical Area Growth Allocation

The Critical Area Growth Allocation was submitted jointly by four applicants: United States Steel Corporation; Brookfield Homes Swan Point, LLC; Fossett & Brugger, Chartered; and Loiederman Soltesz Associates. The County Commissioners approved 164.23 acres as part of the Critical Area Growth Allocation on July 5, 2006. The Critical Area Commission gave final approval on March 7, 2007.

The County has a maximum acreage of Growth Allocation, limited to 1,129 acres to be shared with Indian Head. A portion of this acreage has already been allocated. Minimizing the use of the County's Growth Allocation acreage is required by §297-134.E.3. The Critical Area Growth Allocation was approved by both the County Commissioners and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

ZMA #06-25, Hardy Management Company – 84 Lumber (Route 301)

The applicants, Hardy Management Company, LLC and Pierce Hardy Limited Partnership, the real estate holding companies for 84 Lumber, request an amendment to change the CC, Community Commercial Zone, to BP, Business Park Zone, for the property located at 4460 Crain Highway (Route 301) in White Plains. The subject property is also known as Tax Map 23, Grid 6, Parcels 255, 381 and 382. The applicant presented a case for a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood as defined by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Charles County Zoning Ordinance. A public hearing for ZMA #06-25 was held on September 18, 2006, and it was approved by the County Commissioners on December 4, 2006.

ZMA #06-26, Everything Amish

The applicant, William and Pamela Bowling, owners of Everything Amish in Hughesville, Maryland, requested an amendment to change the AC, Agricultural Conservation Zone to CN, to Commercial Neighborhood Zone for two parcels located directly off Maryland Route 5 in Hughesville, Maryland. The subject property is also known as Tax Map 36, Grid , Parcels 7 and 156. The applicant presented a case for mistake as defined by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Charles County Zoning Ordinance. This ZMA is still pending.

Zoning Text Amendments

The following Zoning Text Amendments were either brought forward in 2006, approved in 2006, or were on the Planning Commission and/or County Commissioners agenda in 2006.

ZTA 05-83, Planned Residential Development (PRD) in the Low Density Residential (RL) Zone

David Cooksey of Loiederman, Soltesz Associates, requested a text amendment to the Charles County Zoning Ordinance by revising Article V, §75, Figure V-1, Maximum Residential Densities; Article VII, §106, Planned Residential Development (PRD) Zone, Article VII, §102, Figure VII-1 Location of Planned Development Zones; Article VIII, §116, Figure VIII-2A Step 1 Density Range Determination for PRD Zones and adding Article VIII, §117, Figure VIII-8B Step 2 Density Determination for PRD applied to RL Base Zone. A public hearing for ZTA #05-83 was held on January 31, 2007, and it was approved by the County Commissioners on March 7, 2007.

ZTA 06-85, Cottage Industry Program

The Cottage Industry Program gives property owners with parcels of five acres or more in the agricultural and rural zones the opportunity to establish a business with goods and services that may not be permitted under a standard home occupation permit. Cottage Industries will be permitted in the Agricultural Conservation (AC) and Rural Conservation (RC) zones, but would require a Special Exception in the Rural Residential zones. A public hearing for ZTA #06-85 was held on November 27, 2006, and it was approved by the County Commissioners on December 14, 2006.

ZTA 06-84, (RC(D)) Lot Size Exemption

The proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance is to add language to allow owners of property within the Rural Conservation Deferred (RC(D)) Zone that: contain features that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or; contain portions of the Mattawoman Stream Valley as delineated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; to create lots smaller than ten (10) acres in order to protect sensitive natural resources and provide critical supporting infrastructure. The amendment revises Chapter 297, Section 88E, Code of Charles County and adds Chapter 297, Section 88F, Code of Charles County. A public hearing for ZTA #06-84 was held on June 19, 2006, and it was approved by the County Commissioners on July 26, 2006.

ZTA 06-87, Churches and Schools in the Business Park (BP) Zone

Bolton and Associates, on behalf of First Baptist Church of Waldorf, originally requested a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for churches in the Business Park (BP) zone as a permitted use and to allow private elementary and secondary schools in the Business Park zone as a Special Exception. The First Baptist Church is currently a legally nonconforming use in the Business Park zone. The property the church is located on was rezoned as BP in the Comprehensive Rezoning, which was based upon the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. A public hearing for ZTA #06-87 was held on March 14, 2007, and it was approved by the County Commissioners on March 24, 2007.

PDZ #06-16, New Charles TOD

The developer of Berry Valley requested an amendment to the approved General Development Plan. The amendment proposes minor changes in the housing types within three (3) development areas. A 6.9 acre townhouse area would become a single-family detached area, another townhouse area containing 7.6 acres would become a condominium/apartment area, and the existing condominium/apartment area would become a location for single family detached structures. This PDZ amendment is still pending.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The preparation of the Planning Commission's Annual Report provides an opportunity to review the year's activities and assess their impacts and importance on implementing the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. As outlined in both Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Charles County Zoning Ordinance, adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan are the primary responsibilities of the Charles County Planning Commission. The most recent update of the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in April of 2006.

As stated previously, actual development can then be compared to the overall vision of future development as articulated in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The overall vision and subsequent policy seeks to concentrate development in the Development District permitting efficient use of current and planned infrastructure improvements including roads, water and sewer, and school construction. Therefore, the overarching land use goal in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan is to direct 75% of all development to the northern and western portions of the County identified as the Development District. Compared to actual development approved in 2006, the County is meeting this goal for final plats at 76%, but is just under the goal at 74% for preliminary plans. However, if the number of acres of land that these buildable lots are located on is considered, the majority of the developed land is actually outside of the Development District. This is because the majority of the development occurring outside of the Development District is single-family-detached subdivisions. Previous years exhibit this same pattern of development as well. This pattern is a reflection of the lower average base density requirements in the rural zones (one unit per three acres versus one unit per acre or less in the Development District). Consequently, any new development activity in the rural area will consume more land per lot than development in the Development District.

Further analysis of preliminary plans and final plats yield that Charles County is approving more lots per year than the target rate necessary to meet housing demands over the next 20 years. According to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, in order to meet population projections, the target number of housing units in the County from the year 2005 to the year 2025 should be 23,300. This breaks down to approximately 1,110 dwelling units per year for the 21 year period. In 2006, 1,350 preliminary lots were approved inside the Development District and 547 were approved outside of the Development District. This means that the County approved 62% more lots inside the Development District than the target rate, as well as 97% more lots outside of the Development District based on the goal of 75% of all development occurring within the boundary of the Development District. Since 2002, the County has realized a surplus in preliminary building lots, but not until more recently was there also a surplus in final plat lots. Further, 1,365 Use and Occupancy (U&O) permits for new housing units were issued in 2006.

In order to continue furthering the goals of the 2006 Charles County Comprehensive Plan and to improve the development process within the County, the Planning Commission must continue implementing the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Continued emphasis must be placed on focusing development in growth areas and discouraging growth in the rural areas of the County. Recommendations for the Planning Commission as a result of this 2006 Annual Report are as follows:

1. **Continue to monitor development approvals inside and outside of the Development District, through the Annual Reporting process.** Current market trends suggest a downturn in development activity that may occur in the next few years, but this needs to be evaluated both inside and outside of the Development District.
2. **Explore ways to integrate regional housing market data into growth management analysis.** The Washington DC Metropolitan Region's market is different from other markets around the country. It is a strong market here given that the job market is strong, and home prices remain relatively affordable considering other metropolitan areas. Over the course of the next year,

Planning staff need to work toward a better understanding of the trends and their impact on growth management policy.

3. **Incorporate market analysis as part of the 2007 Annual Report.** The next Annual Report should include a consideration of the regional housing market data as part of the growth management analysis.

The above recommendations will help the Planning Commission follow and understand growth trends in the Washington DC Metropolitan region, which ultimately affect development in Charles County.

Appendix

A. Planning Staff

Activities of the Planning Commission are supported by staff of the Planning Division. Members of the Planning Division are:

Reed Faasen, Acting Planning Director
Carolyn Mitchell, Administrative Associate
Theresa Pickeral, Administrative Associate
Carrol Everett, Administrative Associate
Sarah Sandy, Administrative Associate

Adequate Public Facilities

Jason Groth, Adequate Public Facilities Program Manager
Tony Puleo, Planner

Community Planning

Cathy Hardy, Community Planning Program Manager
Amy Blessinger, Planner
Beth Clark, Planner
Sheila Geisert, Planning Technician
Michael Morgan, Cartographer

Current Planning

Shelley Wagner, Subdivision and Site Plan Program Manager
Heather Kelley, Planner
Tetchiana Anderson, Planner
Cyndi Bilbra, Planning Technician

Environmental

Charles Rice, Environmental Program Manager
Karen Wigger, Planner
Aimee Dailey, Planner
Mary Grant, Planner
Jerry Ringling, Planner

Zoning

Mary Vance, Zoning Administrator
Charles Quade, Zoning Technician
Ray Buckler, Zoning Technician
Robert Padgett, Zoning Technician
Harold Hancock, Forest Conservation Inspector

B. Maps

The following maps are attached to this report:

Land Use Map

Subdivision Activity Map

Charles County Government Transportation Projects Map

Charles County Government Water and Sewer Map

PLANNING COMMISSION OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

BE IT RESOLVED, this 15th day of October, 2007, by the Planning Commission of Charles County that the document consisting of text, maps, and charts, entitled "2006 Annual Report of the Charles County Planning Commission" and dated July 2007, is hereby adopted in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

CHARLES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

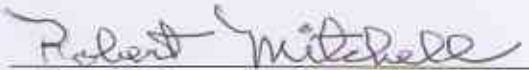
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Raymond L Detig", written over a horizontal line.

Raymond Detig, Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "H. Duncan Creelman, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

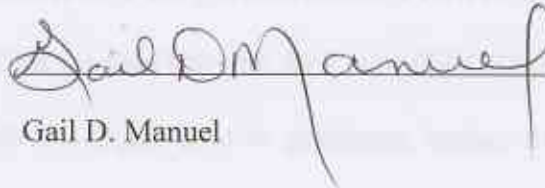
H. Duncan Creelman, Jr., Vice Chairman

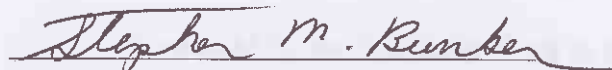
A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert Mitchell", written over a horizontal line.

Robert Mitchell, Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Louis D. Grasso", written over a horizontal line.


Louis D. Grasso


Gail D. Manuel


Stephen Bunker

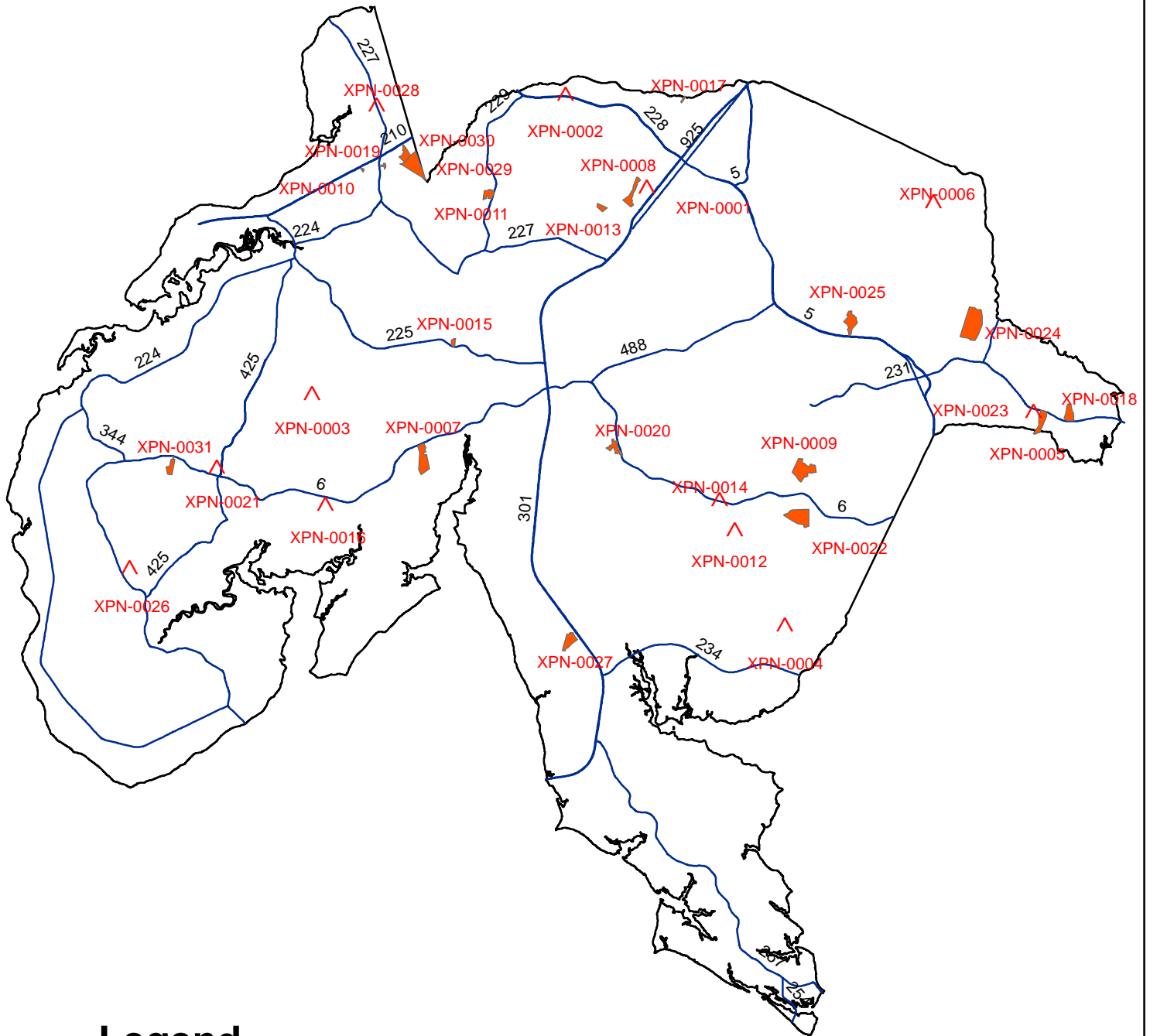

Joseph Richard

ATTEST:





Theresa Pickeral , Clerk

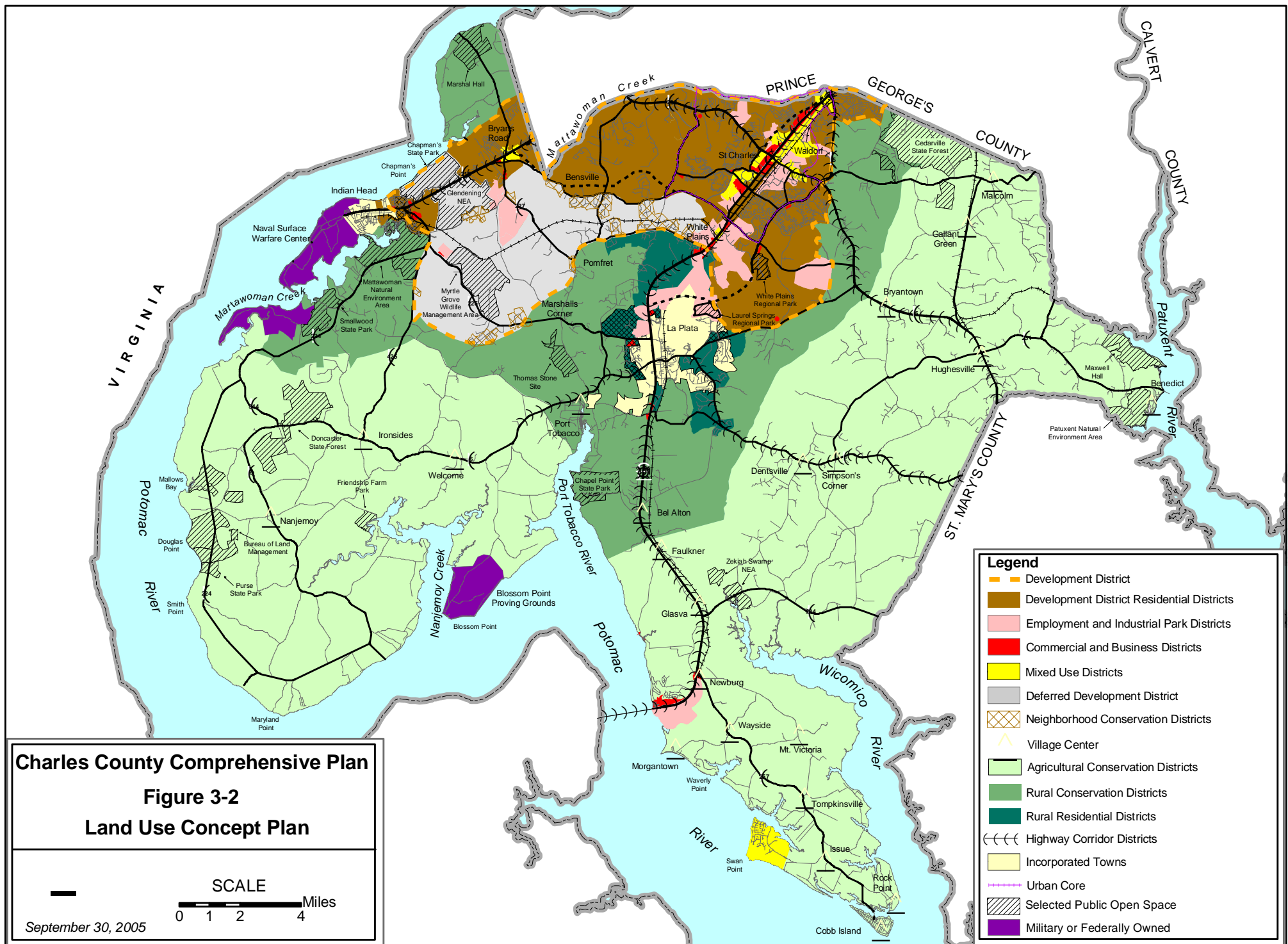
2006 Subdivision Activity Charles County, Maryland

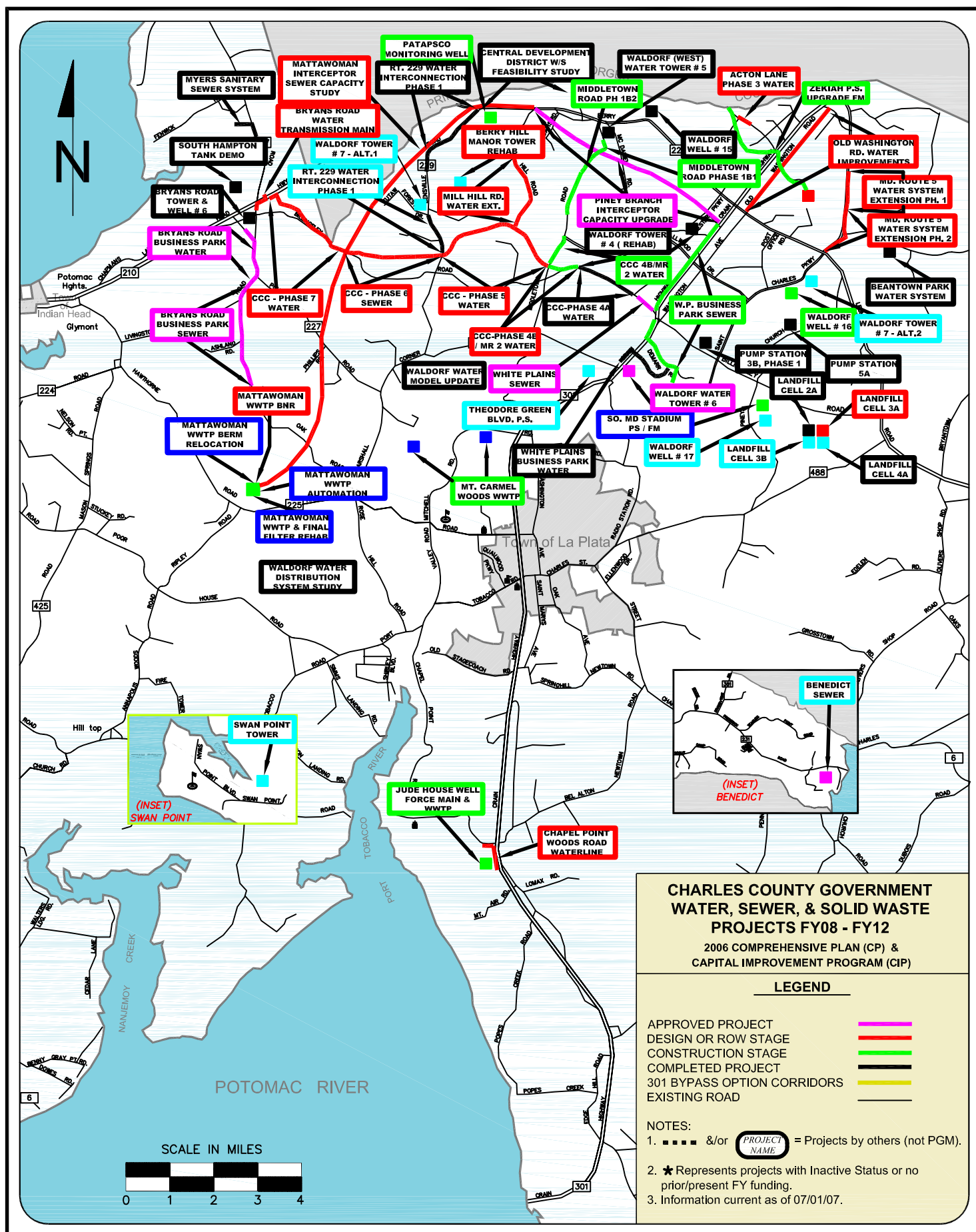


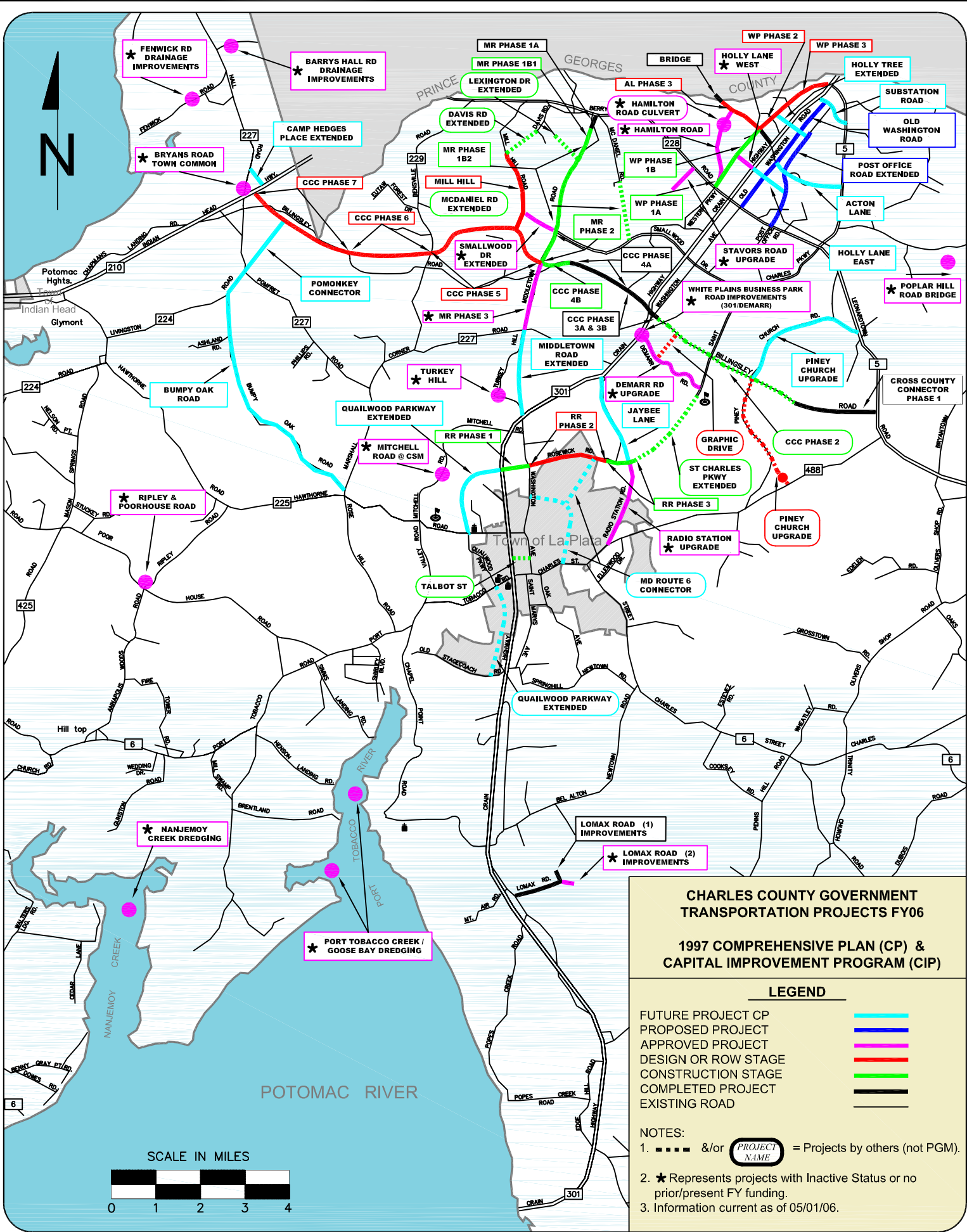
Legend

-  Preliminary Subdivisions
-  Major Roads









**CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FY06**

**1997 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (CP) &
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)**

LEGEND

FUTURE PROJECT CP	Blue line
PROPOSED PROJECT	Cyan line
APPROVED PROJECT	Magenta line
DESIGN OR ROW STAGE	Red line
CONSTRUCTION STAGE	Green line
COMPLETED PROJECT	Black line
EXISTING ROAD	Grey line

NOTES:

1. &/or PROJECT NAME = Projects by others (not PGM).
2. ★ Represents projects with Inactive Status or no prior/present FY funding.
3. Information current as of 05/01/06.